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ABSTRACT

Reading achievement of students from open plan and traditional elementary classes were compared in three areas; speed and accuracy, vocabulary, and comprehension. The first evaluation (Grade 7) indicated that the mean score of the speed and accuracy scale was significantly lower for "open-area" students than for traditional pupils. Score differences on the other two scales were not statistically significant. However, the Grade 8 survey, administered to the same groups after five months of regular instruction, revealed that the mean score differences of the three subtests tended to diminish to insignificant levels. (DLG)

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RESEARCH REPORT

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## A SURVEY OF READING ACHIEVEMENT IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL POPULATION

### Introduction

The purpose of this report is to compare the reading achievement of students from "open-area" and traditional elementary classes who form the Grade 8 student population at Windermere Secondary School. The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Survey E which was used in this study assessed students' reading ability in three areas: Speed & Accuracy, Vocabulary and Comprehension.

Parallel forms of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Survey E, were administered on two occasions. Form 1M of the test was administered to Grade 7 students in all Vancouver elementary schools during November 17-21, 1969. From the Grade 7 reading survey were taken the test scores of the six elementary school populations who form the 1970-71 Grade 8 population at Windermere Secondary School. An alternate Form 2M of the reading test was administered also to the same group of students in Grade 8 during January 26-27, 1971.

### Analysis of Reading Test Scores

In both reading surveys the test scores of students from the "open-area" class (the experimental group in Tables I and II) were compared with the scores of students from traditional elementary classes (the control group in the tables). A "t"-test was computed for each reading subtest in both surveys.

Table I shows that the mean score of the Speed and Accuracy scale was significantly lower for students from the "open-area" class than for students from traditional Grade 7 classes. Although the mean score differences on the other two reading scales are not statistically significant, the "open-area" class obtained slightly higher Vocabulary scores but slightly lower Comprehension

scores than were received by students from traditional elementary classes.

Table II shows the results of the reading survey which was administered to Grade 8 students at Windermere Secondary School during January 26-27, 1971. In the three reading subtests (Speed & Accuracy, Vocabulary, and Comprehension) the mean scores for the experimental group of students formerly from an "open-area" class were slightly lower (but not significantly lower) than the scores received by the remainder of the Grade 8 population who had come from traditional elementary classes. The Grade 8 reading survey which was administered 14 months after the elementary school survey revealed that the mean score differences tended to diminish in the three subtests of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test.

TABLE I: "t" TEST ANALYSES OF DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SCORES ON THE GATES-MACGINITIE READING TEST BETWEEN GRADE 7 STUDENTS IN AN "OPEN AREA" AND OTHERS IN TRADITIONAL CLASSES, NINE MONTHS BEFORE ENTERING WINDERMERE SECONDARY SCHOOL, NOVEMBER 17-21, 1969.

| | Experimental Group | | Control Group |
|---|---|---|---|
| **A. SPEED AND ACCURACY** | | | |
| Number | 48 | | 409 |
| Mean | 10.44 | | 12.07 |
| Standard Deviation | 3.29 | | 4.91 |
| Difference between means | | 1.63 | |
| "t" | | 3.07** | |
| **B. VOCABULARY** | | | |
| Number | 48 | | 409 |
| Mean | 21.06 | | 20.15 |
| Standard Deviation | 6.89 | | 6.40 |
| Difference between means | | 0.91 | |
| "t" | | 0.87 n. s. d. | |
| **C. COMPREHENSION** | | | |
| Number | 48 | | 409 |
| Mean | 30.73 | | 32.49 |
| Standard Deviation | 9.09 | | 9.22 |
| Difference between means | | 1.76 | |
| "t" | | 1.27 n. s. d. | |

Legend: ** significant at the .01 level
n. s. d. no significant difference

TABLE II: "t" TEST ANALYSES OF DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SCORES ON THE GATES-MACGINITIE READING TEST BETWEEN GRADE 8 STUDENTS FROM AN "OPEN AREA" AND OTHERS FROM TRADITIONAL CLASSES, AFTER FIVE MONTHS OF REGULAR INSTRUCTION TOGETHER IN WINDERMERE SECONDARY SCHOOL, JANUARY, 1971.

A. SPEED AND ACCURACY

| | Experimental Group | | Control Group |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number | 49 | | 322 |
| Mean | 12.29 | | 12.75 |
| Standard Deviation | 3.24 | | 3.83 |
| Difference between means | | 0.46 | |
| "t" | | 0.92 n.s.d. | |

B. VOCABULARY

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number | 49 | | 322 |
| Mean | 24.41 | | 24.60 |
| Standard Deviation | 6.43 | | 6.96 |
| Difference between means | | 0.19 | |
| "t" | | 0.195 n.s.d. | |

C. COMPREHENSION

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number | 49 | | 322 |
| Mean | 33.10 | | 33.57 |
| Standard Deviation | 9.33 | | 9.72 |
| Difference between means | | 0.47 | |
| "t" | | 0.32 n.s.d. | |

Legend: n.s.d. no significant difference